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Closing the Reading Fluency Gap in Six Minutes

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Closing the Reading Fluency Gap in Six Minutes

An Action Research Report

By Amy Hanzal

Closing the Reading Fluency Gap in Six Minutes

By Amy Hanzal

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in fulfillment of final requirements for the MAED degree
St. Catherine University
St. Paul, Minnesota

Advisor_____

Date_____

Abstract

The purpose of this action research project was to determine the effects of the implementation of the intervention, The Six Minute Solution, on student oral reading fluency scores. The research study took place in two small reading groups at Rita Murphy Elementary school in Bismarck, ND. One group consisted of three third grade students and one fourth grade students. The second group was made up of three fourth grade students. A total of four data sources were used in the collection of data. These data sources included a district required assessment; AIMSweb benchmark and progress monitoring, The Six Minute Solution placement test/daily progress monitoring, teacher observation, and finally a student survey. The data displayed an overall increase in student oral reading fluency scores over a four week period. Students found this intervention motivating and beneficial to individual progress. The results of this action research indicate that using the intervention, The Six Minute Solution has a positive effect on increased oral reading fluency scores.

Reading fluency is an issue beginning in first grade and continuing through sixth grade. It is an issue for readers who seem to have a clear understanding of all other concepts and component of reading, but lack reading fluency as well as those who struggle across the board with reading components. A large part of the problem has been practice. So often we see students not getting the practice they need to become better readers. They read in school, but time is always an issue. We cannot change what happens at home with student reading, but we can change what happens at school to provide more opportunities for reading practice.

Reading fluency is defined as accurate, rapid, and expressive reading by the National Reading Panel (National Reading Panel, 2000). Reading fluency is measured by the number of words a student reads correctly in a given amount of time. Typically a student has an expected rate of growth depending on his/her starting point and the end of year grade level goal. It is not uncommon that when students struggle with reading fluency it is likely that the comprehension component will also become difficult. Researchers have identified critical variables for increasing reading fluency. Studies have proved that students should be provided with reading material at their instructional level (Gibb & Wilder, 2002; Scott & Shearer-Lingo, 2002, as cited in Alber-Morgan, Matheson-Ramp, Anderson, & Martin 2007); have multiple opportunities for repeated practice (Alber-Martin et. al., 2007); receive corrective feedback (Alber-Martin et. al., 2007); and students need a way to monitor progress (Gibb & Wilder; Scott & Schearer-Lingo, as cited in Alber-Morgan, Matheson-Ramp, Anderson, & Martin 2007).

An effective strategy used to increase reading fluency that has been exercised since the turn of the century is repeated readings. Recent studies have shown positive outcomes of using repeated reading procedures. Repeated reading involves the student reading and re-reading a story either a predetermined number of times, to a pre-determined level of fluency, or until a predetermined percent above his/her baseline fluency score is reached (Ardoyn, Mccall, & Klubnik, 2007). Terrien (Ardoyn et. al., 2007) found a medium effect size when students re-read passages twice (.57) and large effect sizes when students re-read passages three (.85) and four (.95) times. Repeated reading interventions can be done one on one, in a small group setting, or whole group.

If we as teachers expect our students to become better readers we need to provide reading practice. The saying, "Practice makes perfect," is appropriate in the case of reading as well as many other areas. "The benefits of repeated readings of the same passage to build reading fluency have been well documented in many research studies," (Levy, Nicholls, K Kroshen, 1993, as cited in Adams & Brown 2009). The Six-Minute Solution helps students succeed at reading fluency by using an instructional method of repeated readings and partnering students with peers with similar reading fluency needs (Adams & Brown 2009). The Six-Minute Solution is an intervention tool for educators to use to increase students' oral reading fluency. It in essence is an intervention that once refined by the interventionists takes only six minutes each day to implement. Another important component of repeated reading is performance cueing. Therrien (2004, as cited in Lo, Cooke, & Starling, 2011) states, "Performance cueing and graphing have been associated with increases in oral reading fluency for students with and without disabilities" (p.118).

I wanted to give myself and classroom teachers another tool to be used to close the reading fluency gap and make an attempt to raise reading fluency scores. To do this I became more familiar with the intervention, The Six Minute Solution (Adams & Brown, 2009), and planned to educate other classroom teachers about it, as well. It is an intervention that can be used with a small group as well as a whole group and takes minimal time to administer. All students can benefit from this intervention as it is individualized and each student can work at his/her current reading level.

The Six-Minute Solution can run the duration of the school year. It begins with word lists and progresses through increasingly higher level reading passages. Students work on the same list/passage for five days before moving to the next passage. This allows for the intervention to be long term and in turn allows for students to continue making reading fluency growth.

The Six Minute Solution is based on the premises that six minutes' worth of concentrated practice on targeted literacy skills-such as phonetic elements, automatic word recognition, and passage reading-can increase student reading achievement. The program can be easily implemented in a variety of educational settings by following six easy steps (Adams & Brown 2009 p. 7).

This action research took place in my reading classroom at Rita Murphy Elementary School in Bismarck, ND. The first group of students consisted of four students: three of which are third grade students and the fourth student is in grade four. These students were selected based on scores on the beginning of year (BOY) assessments. The second group of students consisted of three fourth grade students, also

selected according to their BOY assessment scores. BOY assessments for both groups included AIMSweb benchmark, MAP testing and the Rigby leveling system.

Research supports the effectiveness of repeated reading interventions. When done with fidelity, interventions centered on repeated reading will help to increase students' oral reading fluency and in turn help to increase student success in the other areas of reading. Thus, "Reading connected text fluently is an essential, life-long skill that all students must master in order to be successful not only in academics, but also in everyday life" (Lo, Cooke, & Starling 2011, p. 115). The question remaining is what are the effects of The Six-Minute Solution on student oral reading fluency scores? Will implementing The Six Minutes Solution together with existing interventions cause student oral reading fluency scores to rise? Will there be transfer from The Six Minute Solution into other oral reading fluency measures such as AIMSweb benchmark and progress monitoring?

Description of Research Process

The Six Minute Solution intervention research process and data collection occurred from September 3, 2012 until October 4, 2013. A variety of data collection sources were used to determine the effectiveness of The Six Minute Solution on oral reading fluency. The data sources used include district required assessments; AIMSweb benchmark and progress monitoring, The Six Minute Solution placement test/daily progress monitoring, teacher observation, and finally a student survey.

The first data source used was the district required assessment, AIMSweb benchmark. This was given to all students to collect a baseline data point to determine

where each student was reading in terms of end of year grade level expectation. This assessment is given three times a year. These scores were compared to national norms of same grade level peers. This data was used as an indicator of need as well as where the appropriate instructional reading level was. The expectation was for each student to be reading at the 40th percentile or higher. For this assessment students were given three probes and one minute to read each probe. As the student read all errors were recorded and a median score was calculated. Instructional recommendations were then recommended for each student based on his/her final score for oral reading fluency. These recommendations include, well above average; consider individualized instruction, above average; consider individualized instruction, average; continue current program, below average; further assess and consider individualized instruction, and well below average; begin problem solving. The students I worked with fell anywhere from average to well below average.

Once AIMSweb benchmarking was completed and small groups were formed I administered The Six Minute Solution placement test for each student (see Appendix A). This placement test was conducted one on one and determined the students' instructional reading level. Each student read word lists and sample passages at various grade levels until they reached a maximum number of errors. AIMSweb benchmark scores were used as a guide and indicated where to begin the placement test. Students who scored in the well below and below average range on the AIMSweb benchmark began one to two grade levels below their actual grade level. They began with reading the word lists to guide a starting point for the reading passages. Once they reached the maximum number of errors, they read a passage at the corresponding grade level to the word list. Many students ended up reading only one passage as it was the correct instructional level for

them to begin The Six Minute Solution. The groups were finalized by where students' reading levels were. I ended up with a group of three third graders and one fourth grader and a group of three fourth graders.

The next data source used was weekly AIMSweb progress monitoring and daily progress monitoring through The Six Minute Solution (see Appendices B-C). This went on for the remaining three weeks of the research process. AIMSweb was used to chart progress towards individualized goals with fresh reads. Data from AIMSweb benchmark was used to determine the appropriate grade level to progress monitor students at. If their AIMSweb oral reading score was below the 19%ile, a survey level assessment was given to find their instructional reading level. They read passages from lower grade levels until they read between the 19-30%ile. Once that was reached a goal was set for the student to reach the 40%ile of that grade level. They were progress monitored weekly at that grade level and progress was charted. In addition to monitoring their fresh read oral reading fluency, I also monitored them daily through The Six Minute Solution. They read one story for five days and charted their progress daily. We began Day One with a fresh read score. On Days Two through Four we choral read once followed by a one minute timed read. Students charted their scores on graph paper to see any improvements. On Day Five we choral read first and then they each read individually for me to track errors. After their final read they charted their scores and we discussed any progress. This discussion led to great conversation because the students were always pleased with how they increased from the beginning of the week to the end. We would also watch to see if the cold timing scores increased from story to story. It was exciting to see them grow as readers and for them to see their growth themselves.

One data source ran throughout the data collection window. This data source was teacher observation. Just as any teacher does, I was constantly making observations. Many of the observations were recorded on a teaching log (see Appendix D) while some were meant just for mental notation. I made daily observations while students were doing their one minute read for The Six Minute Solution. I would observe reading tendencies for students, errors they were making, reading rates, and reading expression. Many observations allowed me to give immediate feedback and needed little to no recording. One type of observation was speed reading. I often spoke with a student about slowing down while reading. I explained that fluency is more than reading fast, it is about how it sounds and what you remember at the end. I modeled several times for the student what fluent reading sounded like. Another observation made was dropped endings. One of the students would drop inflected endings on words while reading. Yet another observation I made was poor word attack skills. A few students struggled with this. When they came to a word they did not know, they would either skip the word or say a random word that began with the same beginning sound. These types of observations allowed me to target these skills and also guided the reading lessons each day.

The final data source used was the student survey. It was administered the week of October 3-7th. The purpose of this survey was to gain knowledge of how the students were feeling about their reading, the intervention, The Six Minute Solution, and their overall progress. This survey was given in paper and pencil format (see Appendix E) for students to fill out. It consisted of nine questions with both multiple choice as well as short answer completion. I read the survey aloud to the group of three third graders and

one fourth grader. The other group of three fourth graders read the survey themselves. Each group was given as much time as needed to complete the survey and I assisted with spelling as needed. I collected the surveys to use the information to assess how the intervention was going and made any needed changes.

Finally, I collected data that was not one of the data sources, but provided useful information for my reading groups and instruction. I used the Rigby leveling system to again level my students, but this time for bookroom use. By having my students leveled with Rigby allowed me to make appropriate use of our school's bookroom and gave me the opportunity to pull books at my students' instructional level to use in our reading groups. We used the books to work on not only reading fluency, but also accuracy and the skills I took note of during teacher observations. This was something new for me in reading groups as I have never used Rigby before. The students responded well to the new books I pulled and had a higher interest level in reading these books than with the other materials we have used in the past. I saw their confidence increasing throughout the four week process and saw that they enjoyed using the books from the bookroom for their reading instruction.

At the completion of my research process, I had a total of four data collections. These data collections include district required assessments; AIMSweb benchmark and progress monitoring, The Six Minute Solution placement test/daily progress monitoring, teacher observation, and finally a student survey. In the next section I will discuss my analysis of how The Six Minute Solution affects student oral reading fluency scores.

Analysis of Data

At the conclusion of my action research, I analyzed data I collected by looking at the four main data sources. These data sources include district required assessments; AIMSweb benchmark and progress monitoring, The Six Minute Solution placement test/daily progress monitoring, teacher observation, and finally a student survey. First I analyzed the district required assessments that included both AIMSweb benchmarking and progress monitoring which provided quantitative data. I then spent time looking at another source of quantitative data from The Six Minute Solution placement test and daily progress monitoring. Following the review of The Six Minute Solution data, I used teacher observation as a form of qualitative data. Finally, I used student reading surveys as yet another source of qualitative data. After analyzing these data sources I felt there was a fair balance of qualitative and quantitative data as well as teacher and student contribution to determine the effects of The Six Minute Solution on oral reading fluency.

The first thing I analyzed was the district required assessment, AIMSweb benchmark data. This data was essential in determining how students placed in my District Reading small groups. Each student was assessed on oral reading fluency at his/her actual grade level. These scores were then compared to national norms to determine where they were in terms of being on grade level. This assessment was administered at the beginning of the research process and given just once throughout the duration of the study. Of the four fourth grade students I work with only one scored on grade level (at or above the 40%ile). The others scored at the 2%ile, 11%ile and 16%ile. At the end of fourth grade students are expected to read 128 words correct in one minute. In an attempt to close the reading fluency gap, interventions were created for these students.

Fourth grade students were expected to read 100 words correct in one minute at BOY and by EOY, they should be able to read 128 words correct in one minute. Figure 1 shows the relationship between the fourth grade BOY reading fluency score, Students A, B, C and D's actual fourth grade BOY score, and the fourth grade expected EOY reading fluency score. The graph demonstrates the gain in reading fluency score each student must achieve in order to meet grade expectations at the end of fourth grade.

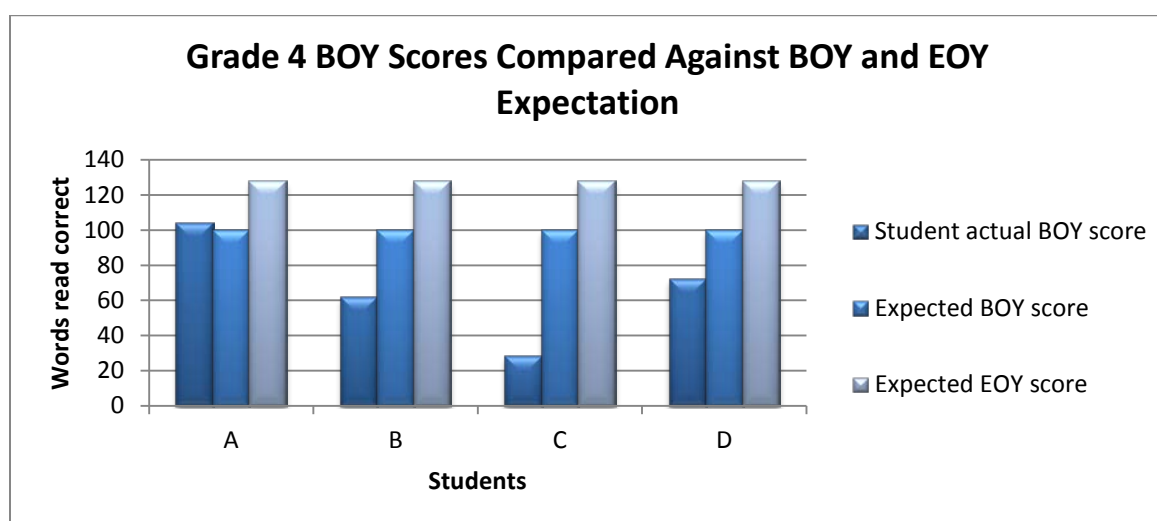


Figure 1. Fourth grade students' BOY scores compared against BOY and EOY expectation.

I also analyzed AIMSweb benchmark data for three third grade students. All three of the students scored significantly below expected EOY grade level scores. Their percentile scores were 5%ile, 6%ile and 11%ile. Third grade students were expected to read 77 words correct in one minute at the beginning of the year and by the end they should reach 116 words correct in one minute. Figure 2 shows third grade expected BOY and expected EOY reading fluency scores as well as Students E, F, and G's actual BOY. The graph demonstrates the gain in reading fluency score each student must achieve in

order to meet grade expectations at the end of third grade

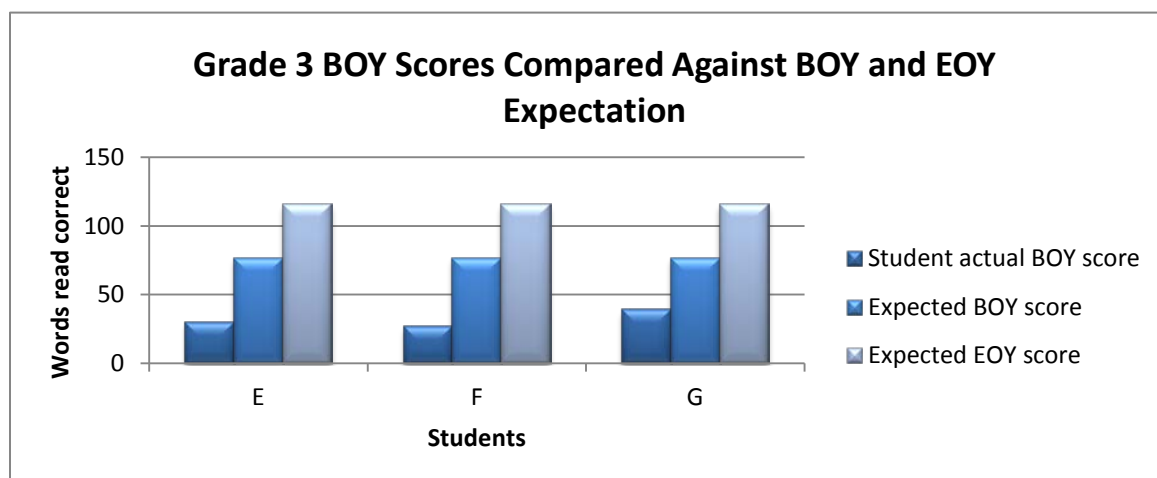


Figure 2. Third grade student BOY scores compared against BOY and EOY expectation.

This data was used to formulate workable groups to begin instruction to improve student oral reading fluency. Part of the instruction consisted of the daily use of The Six Minute Solution as a form of repeated reading practice. This data was also used to determine those students who would need a survey level assessment through AIMSweb to determine the appropriate grade level each student should be progress monitored at. After looking at this data, I was able to see that six of the seven students needed to be assessed further with the survey level assessment. Because these six students were not reading at or above the 40%ile they will be progress monitored out of grade level. Once the survey level assessments were complete I was able to see what grade level each of these students were able to reach the 40%ile. I discovered that students B and D reached the 40%ile at the third grade reading level while students C, E, F, and G all met the 40%ile at the second grade reading level. Student A was reading at his/her current grade level which was at fourth grade. Groups were formed based on this data. Students A, B, and D were one group and students C, E, F, and G were another group.

Once survey level assessments were completed and groups were formed, progress monitoring began. Each student was progress monitored at his/her instruction level through AIMSweb once weekly. The purpose of AIMSweb progress monitoring was to determine if carry-over was taking place. Each student had a starting point based on his/her survey level scores or, as in the case of Student A, benchmark scores. Figures 3, 4 and 5 display students' progress for at their instructional level.

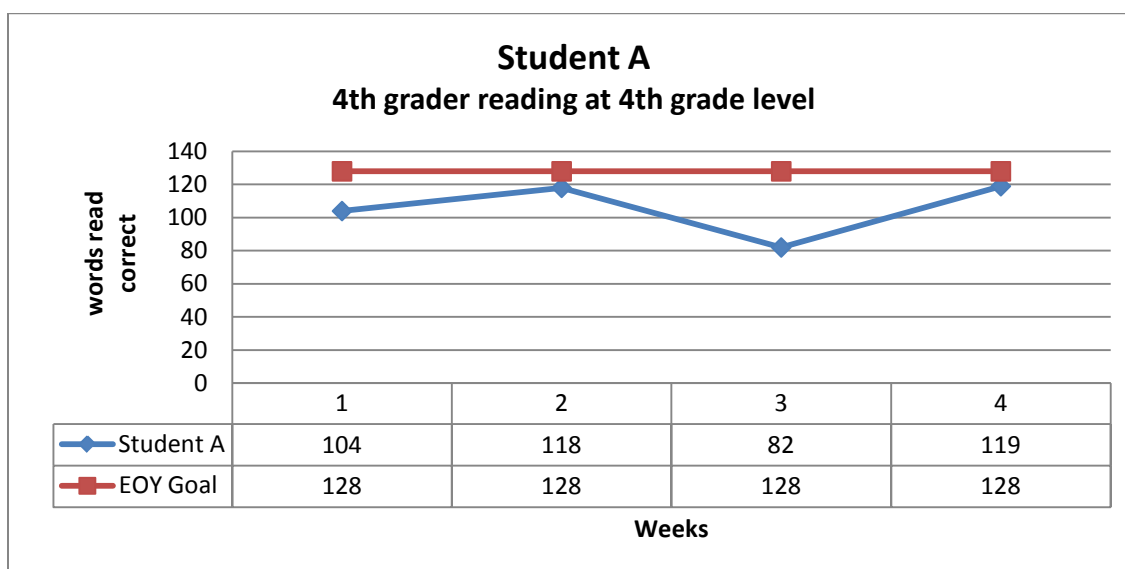


Figure 3. Student A AIMSweb progress monitoring scores over four weeks.

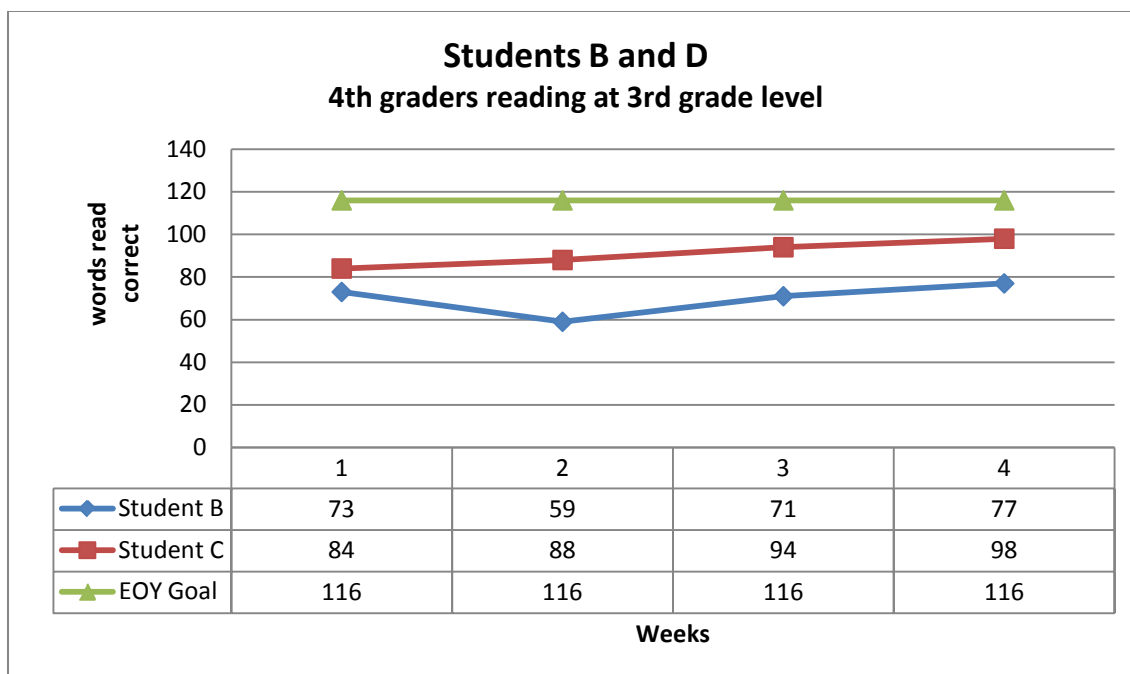


Figure 4. Students B and D AIMSweb progress monitoring scores over four weeks.

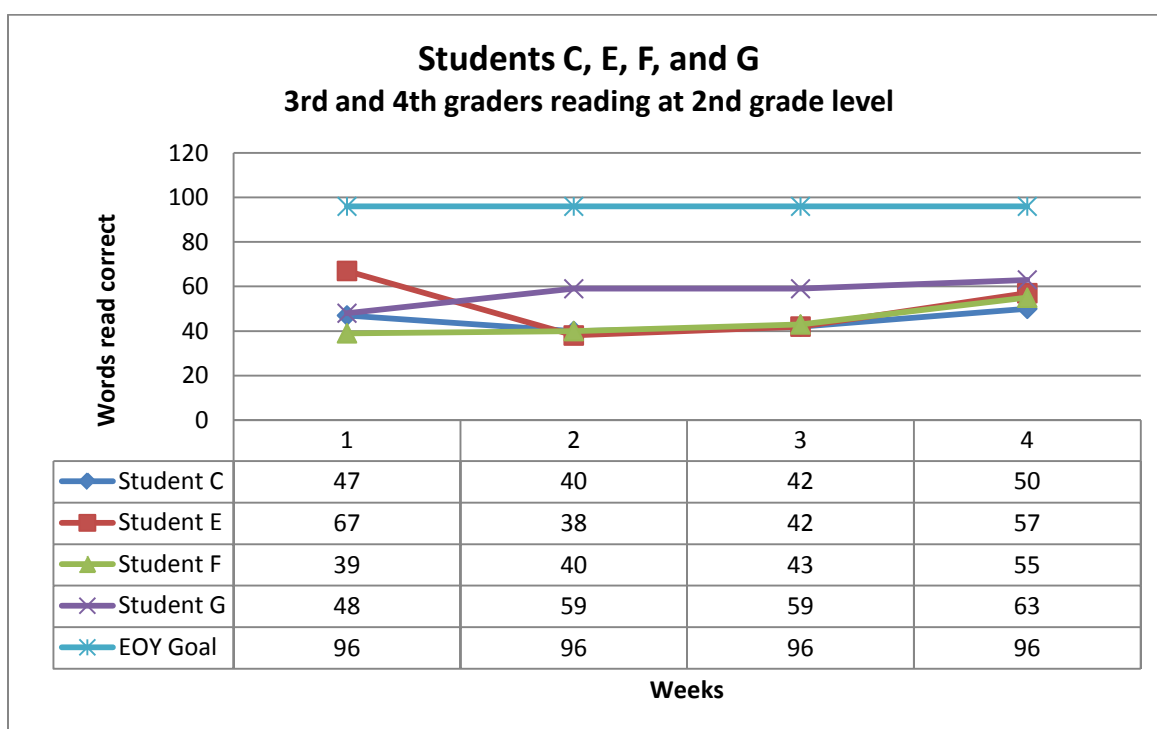


Figure 5. Students C, E, F and G AIMSweb progress monitoring scores over four weeks.

This data shows that carry-over took place. There were times when student progress monitoring scores dropped. Although scores did drop at some point, they did raise the following week and continued to show upward progress.

The second data source analyzed was The Six Minute Solution placement assessments and daily progress monitoring. After I determined the students who needed fluency work, I assessed them individually to place them in The Six Minute Solution intervention. Placement assessments consisted of each student reading a word list as well as a placement passage. The purpose was to determine the appropriate reading level within The Six Minute Solution for each student. Each student first read a set of leveled word lists. I used the knowledge I gained from the AIMSweb benchmark to determine a starting point on the word lists. Students read the word lists until they reached their instructional level (2 errors out of 10 words). Students then read a placement passage at that same reading level to assess their oral reading score at that particular reading level. All seven students were placed in The Six Minute Solution. Through researching the program I read that when placing students err on the side of easy at first. I did this because they were in between levels (i.e. Level 3 was at independent while Level 4 was at frustration). At the conclusion of placing students I ended up with a group of fourth grade students on Level 3 and a group of three third graders and one fourth grader on Level 1.

After completing all the appropriate placement assessment and finalizing groups I was able to begin gathering daily progress monitoring using The Six Minute Solution reading passage. Each day the students and I followed the same procedure set up by The Six Minute Solution. This procedure began on Day One with a passage preview. Each

student read for one minute and scored fluency and charted his/her scores independently on this/her individual graphs. On Days Two through Four we choral read aloud for one minute followed by a timed read of each student. Upon the completion of the timed read, each student again charted his/her scores on his/her individual graph. On Day Five the students performed hot reads where each student read for me and I tracked errors. They graphed their final score on their graphs. We talked each day about how we are looking for our data points to go up on the graph. After each new passage we again talked about how we want to see the first data point of each passage to get higher than the last. They got excited to see their data points rising on the graphs and I was able to see their confidence levels rising as well. Figure 6 shows cold timing scores to hot timing scores for students A, B, and D. After reviewing this data, I could see that students were in fact progressing throughout the week while rereading the same passage each day. The scores reflect my findings that their oral reading fluency was increasing with rereading practice. Figures 6 and 7 display this data.

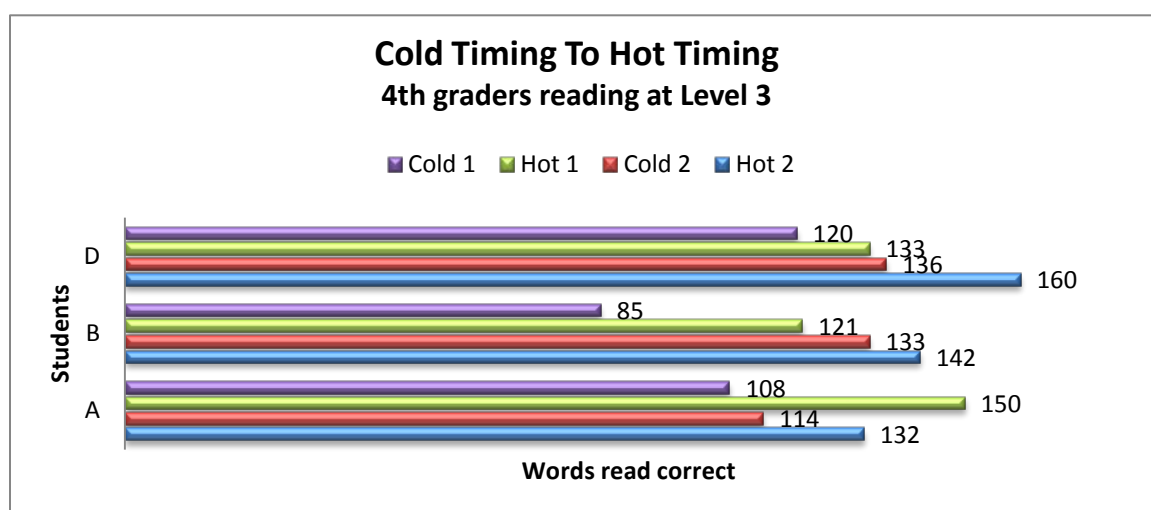


Figure 6. Cold timing scores compared to hot timing scores for two reading passages for fourth grade students reading at Level 3.

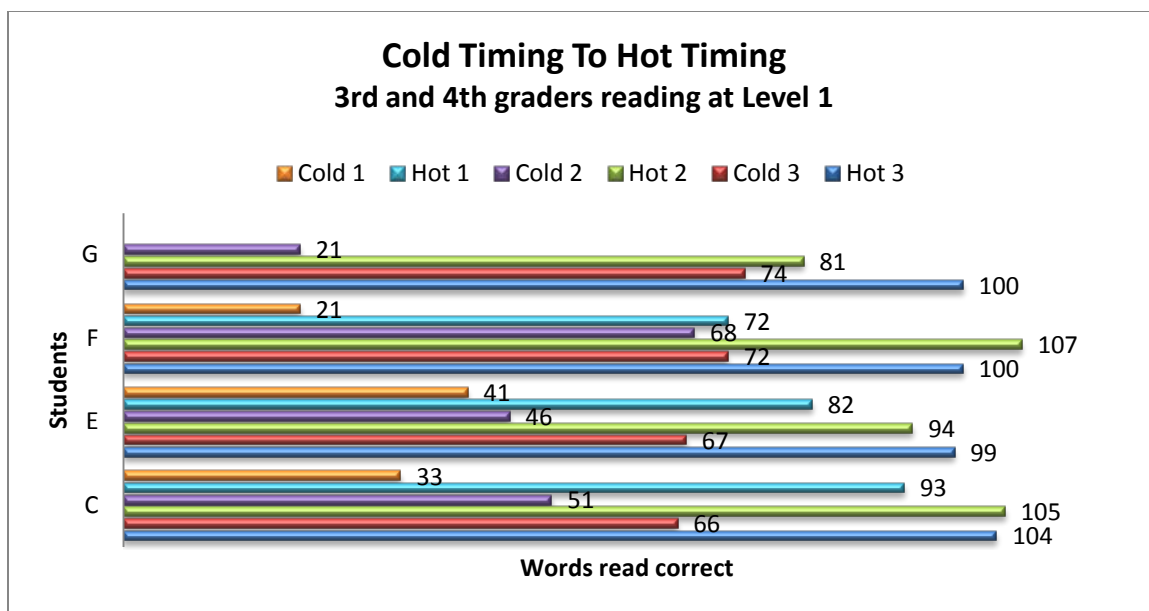


Figure 7. Cold timing scores compared to hot timing scores for two reading passages for third and fourth grade students reading at Level 1.

From analyzing this data I was also able to see that students increased their cold timing scores. With each new passage cold timing the graph line went up. This was exciting for both me as well as the students. They felt like they were becoming better readers and they had their graphs to show it. Figures 8 and 9 show how cold timing scores increased with each new passage.

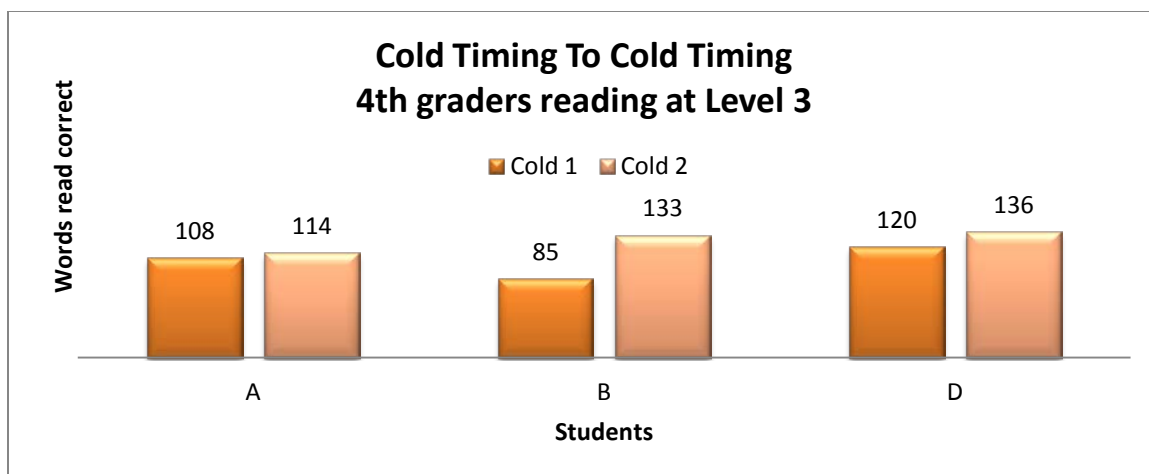


Figure 8. Cold timing scores from one passage to the next for fourth grade students reading at Level 3.

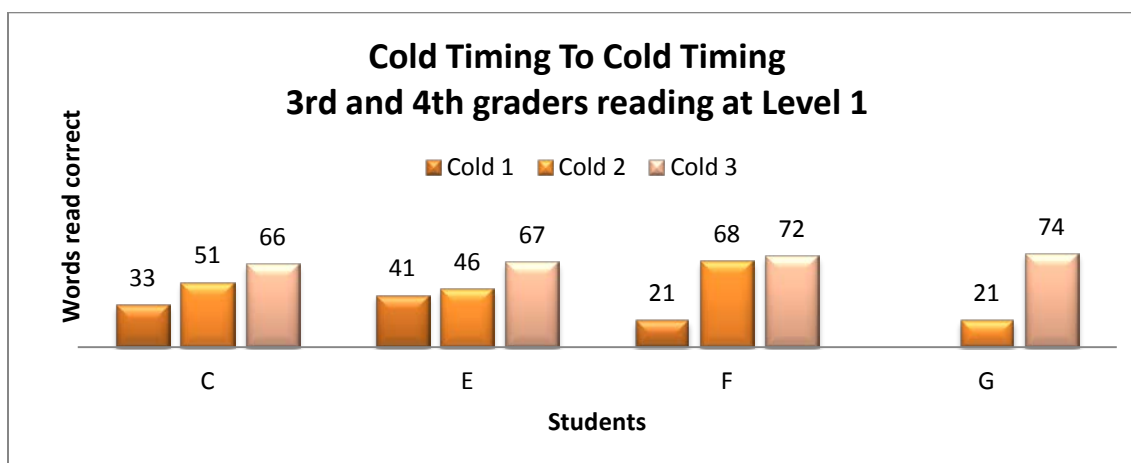


Figure 9. Cold timing scores from one passage to the next for third and fourth grade students reading at Level 1.

The third data source I reviewed was teacher observations. I kept a log of observations I made throughout the four week data collecting period. I used an observation checklist that allowed me to quickly check off certain types of observations as well as a journal of more individualized observations and notes. Some of the specific

skills I watched for and tracked included but were not limited to; students followed along while reading, skipped words while reading, lost place during reading, dropped word endings, were speed reading (read with no expression, didn't watch for punctuation), and read in a quiet voice or whisper.

Some of these student behaviors were observed more often than others. I noticed that one student had a hard time reading with expression. He wanted to speed read to gain a higher ending score and didn't do his personal best with expression. I reiterated that reading fluency is not simply reading as fast as we can, but rather reading with great expression, tone and pace. It was interesting to me that this particular student thought that if he just simply read as fast as he could he would be working towards becoming a better reader. It took several reminders and conversations with this student to finally get him to understand that he was not improving his reading fluency. It took a lot of modeling real fluent reading before he understood the importance of expression and watching for punctuation. He in turn was able to comprehend the passages with more ease after slowing down and reading with good expression, tone and pace.

Another common observation was skipping words while reading. I found that quite often I would mark errors for words skipped during reading. When students skipped words I began tapping my pencil as a cue to them to go back and reread the sentence. Most often after they reread a sentence they saw and read all the words in the sentence. If it occurred during a timed read, I simply circled the word and asked them to reread after the timer sounded. As the weeks went by I saw a decrease in the number of times I circled skipped words.

A dropped word ending was also a common mistake I observed. A few students made many errors because of dropped endings. I did a mini lesson on word endings and how they change the meaning of the word and impact the story. Like with skipped words, I used the pencil tap approach when appropriate to help students to go back and really look at the words they were reading. Over the time frame of this study I saw that students made less and less of this type of error and I had to tap or circle words less often.

Losing his/her place while reading was another common observation. I found myself asking students to track with their fingers or pencils to help them to keep from losing their place while reading. When they lost their place it affected their final fluency score because they had to spend extra time finding where they were in the passage. I found that if we didn't start reading until everyone was pointing at the first word we had less instances of getting lost. Figure 10 shows the most frequent types of observations made while working on The Six Minute Solution.

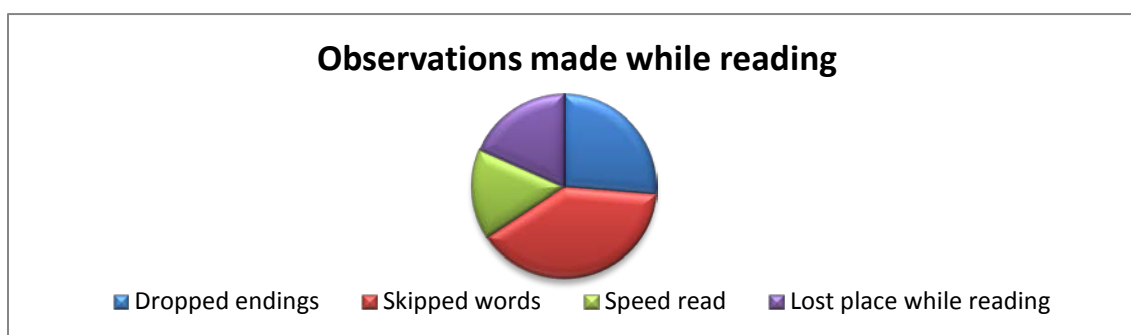


Figure 10. Most frequent observations made while working in The Six Minute Solution.

The final data source used in this study was a student survey. I waited until closer to the conclusion of the study to survey my students in order to give them time to become familiar with The Six Minute Solution and to also become comfortable with me. By

waiting to administer the survey, my students and I got an opportunity to build a trusting relationship which likely assisted in gathering more accurate and honest responses from the students. The survey consisted of nine questions, eight of which were multiple choice and one open-ended question. When it was time to give the student survey I explained the purpose of the survey and the importance of answering honestly. I reassured them that they should answer the way they truly felt and not the way they thought I wanted them to answer. The survey was in the form of paper and pencil and took just a few minutes. Each student put up a privacy folder so his/her answers would be private between him/her and me. I read the questions aloud and allowed time for them to answer. I was able to explain any misunderstanding they had while taking the survey.

The results for the student survey for the most part were what I had expected but at the same time interesting in some ways. The first question asked, “I like to read! YES! Just a little. Not at all.” To my surprise the students’ combined results were split almost in half between, “YES!” and “Just a little.” I was pleasantly surprised that none of the students answered, “Not at all.” I have always assumed that when students struggle to the extent of some of these students they do not enjoy reading. My survey was proof that with these students this is in fact untrue. Another question asked was, “I think I am a good reader!” and my lowest readers all agreed by answering, “Oh YES!” Six of the seven students surveyed also replied, “Yes!” to the question that asked if they enjoy how we practice reading during reading group. This confirmed that students do in fact enjoy The Six Minute Solution approach to practice reading. All seven students were asked to analyze their own graphs. After they reviewed the graphs they were all able to answer, “Going up,” to the question that asked what their graphs were doing.

The last question asked was an open-ended question. It asked the students what they would change about The Six Minute Solution. Some responses included, “Nothing.” “No timing.” “To not do it on Wednesday or Friday.” and “Practice reading to yourself more.” The answer I was most pleased with came from the question, “The Six Minute Solution is helping me become a better reader.” All seven of the students circled, “Yes!” This is important as it told me that The Six Minute Solution intervention should be continued for continued reading success. Figure 11 displays results from the student reading survey.

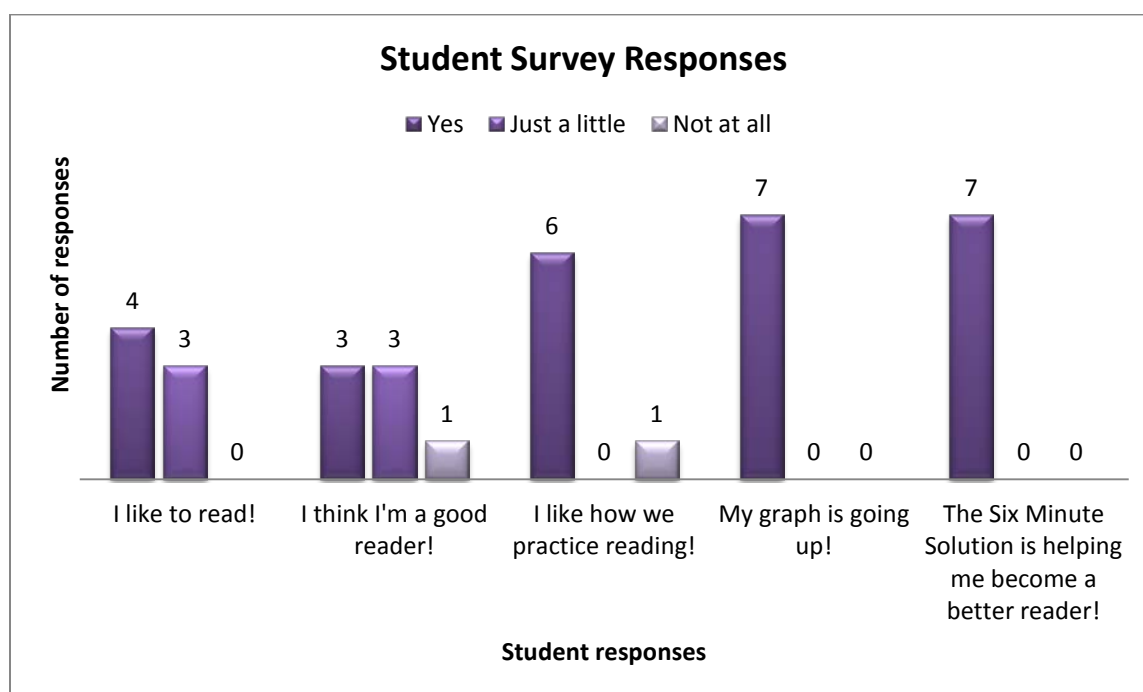


Figure 11. Student responses to reading survey.

In conclusion, based on the data I have gathered and presented and by the observations I have made in my classroom, I believe that the use of The Six Minute Solution is a benefit to students when it comes to increasing oral reading fluency scores. The Six Minute Solution takes a repeated reading approach to practice reading and help

to increase oral reading fluency scores. The data collected through this study supports professional literature and research findings referenced in this paper about effective ways to raise oral reading fluency scores. Students in the study reported that they were becoming better readers, which is supported by the data on their student graphs.

In the next section of my paper I will explain an action plan for my future reading groups. Using what I have learned through this research process I will describe how I plan to continue the use of Six Minute Solution to help raise student oral reading fluency scores.

Action Plan

My research demonstrated a positive impact on student oral reading fluency scores. Students looked forward to and enjoyed working with The Six Minute Solution during this research period. Students expressed their positive thoughts to me both verbally as well as through the student survey. They all shared that they feel The Six Minute Solution is contributing to the increase in oral reading fluency scores. The results of my action research indicate that student oral reading fluency increased week by week for these participating students. Increased fluency scores influenced higher motivation, engagement and raised confidence among all students.

One reason this proved to be successful is that students were given the opportunity to reread a selected passage more than one time. The Six Minute Solution provides students with repeated readings as a method of increasing oral reading fluency. Through this research I found that this proved to be true for the students that participated in my study. Students reread the same passage twice each day for five days before moving onto another passage. They kept track of difficult words while reading, which

gave us the opportunity to talk about those words together after the timed reading was complete. The result of this research confirms results of other research projects that identify repeated readings to be a successful strategy to increase oral reading fluency. One case in point was a study conducted by Swain, Leader-Janssen, & Conley with a fifth-grade boy. The purpose of the study was to prove the effectiveness of three interventions, 1) repeated reading, 2) audio listening passage review preview, and 3) listening passage preview. After 12 weeks of interventions, it was found that repeated reading and listening passage preview were both effective interventions and growth was made in each area and oral reading scores increased (2013).

In the future I would like to continue using The Six Minute Solution as an intervention to increase oral reading fluency scores. After conducting this research project there are few changes I would make.

- Extend this intervention to all grade levels I work with.
- Plan for more time to teach the graphing piece of the intervention.
- Spend more time teaching students to track difficult words so we can talk about them and learn them for more accurate fluency scores.
- Practice the partner method for using The Six Minute Solution in groups of even numbers.
- Assist classroom teachers in getting started with The Six Minute Solution in their classrooms in a whole group setting.

My research was done over a four week period with positive results on student oral reading fluency scores. After conducting this project, I decided that continuing this

intervention over a longer period of time will provide students with further benefits and continued increase of oral reading fluency scores. Students communicated through their reading surveys that they too like The Six Minute Solution and felt that they were becoming better readers. Through conversations with my students, they all stated they would like to continue using this strategy. Something I will definitely continue doing with The Six Minute Solution is sending copies of their daily progress monitoring graphs home for parents to view at the end of each passage. It was a useful way to communicate weekly progress to parents to keep them informed of what was taking place during reading group.

I am anxious to see further transfer of increased oral reading fluency scores into other areas. AIMSweb benchmark is scheduled to be administered again after Christmas. I am curious to see the long term effects of The Six Minute Solution to this assessment. During the data collection window for this research project, I did see some transfer to student AIMSweb progress monitoring, but will be curious to see what kind of transfer will be present during the winter benchmark. Overall, the effect of the implementation of The Six Minute Solution was increased student oral reading fluency scores as well as increased confidence and motivation for students.

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Appendix A

It rained all day long. The wind and rain knocked the remaining	12
leaves to the ground where they were swept into the street. Today was	25
a typical fall day.	29
Just two days ago, the sun was out and the temperatures were very	42
pleasant. Raking leaves into large playful piles was very relaxing.	52
The family worked together gathering the maple leaves into piles.	62
Kids will be kids, and they loved jumping and hiding in the leaves. Even	76
their dog liked to romp around in the leaves. It was fun for everyone.	90
The next day, the weather changed slightly. Clouds began to roll	101
into the area and darken the sky. It did not rain then, but it was clear	117
that winter was near. The family thought that the ground would be	129
covered in no time. Winter was approaching fast.	137
They awoke to the rain hitting the roof of their home. It was a light	152
rain, so they figured it would rain all day. They were right. Now the kids	167
would not be able to play in the leaves. The leaves were all wet and	182
brown. They were no longer dry and colorful.	190
The winds picked up speed and sent the piles of leaves blowing	202
across the yard and into the street. The kids thought they were pretty	215
lucky to have been able to play in the leaves yesterday.	226
Later in the day, the street sweeper came into their neighborhood	237
and, with its mighty vacuum, gobbled up the leaves that had found their	250
way into the street. The leaves were gone.	258
That night the kids were tucked into bed for the evening. As they	271
slept, the rain turned to snow.	277
The kids dreamed of sledding and snowmen. The next morning	287
their dreams came true. Snow!	292

It rained all day long. The wind and rain knocked the remaining leaves to the ground where they were swept into the street. Today was a typical fall day.

Just two days ago, the sun was out and the temperatures were very pleasant. Raking leaves into large playful piles was very relaxing.

The family worked together gathering the maple leaves into piles. Kids will be kids, and they loved jumping and hiding in the leaves. Even their dog liked to romp around in the leaves. It was fun for everyone.

The next day, the weather changed slightly. Clouds began to roll into the area and darken the sky. It did not rain then, but it was clear that winter was near. The family thought that the ground would be covered in no time. Winter was approaching fast.

They awoke to the rain hitting the roof of their home. It was a light rain, so they figured it would rain all day. They were right. Now the kids would not be able to play in the leaves. The leaves were all wet and brown. They were no longer dry and colorful.

The winds picked up speed and sent the piles of leaves blowing across the yard and into the street. The kids thought they were pretty lucky to have been able to play in the leaves yesterday.

Later in the day, the street sweeper came into their neighborhood and, with its mighty vacuum, gobbled up the leaves that had found their way into the street. The leaves were gone.

That night the kids were tucked into bed for the evening. As they slept, the rain turned to snow.

The kids dreamed of sledding and snowmen. The next morning their dreams came true. Snow!

As soon as the temperature drops, people start getting excited up in Nome, Alaska. They never go to bed at night without peeking out their windows first. They want to see what the weather is doing. If a light snow is falling, they know that by morning the roads will be dangerous. That's where the sled dogs come into play.	12 25 39 52 60
Sled dogs are fun, peppy, medium-sized dogs. Their colors are different, but they all have thick, downy coats of fur. The dogs' tails curl up when they are excited.	71 85 90
There's nothing a sled dog loves more than the cold, fierce winds of winter. Even though most owners build shelters for their sled dogs, the dogs prefer to sleep outside. They tuck their noses into their tails. They snuggle their bodies deep in the snow.	103 115 128 135
Sled dogs are playful, intelligent, and very vocal. They do not bark. Instead, they howl like wolves. It's not uncommon for a pack of sled dogs to have a group howl at sunset and sunrise.	147 160 170
A person who owns sled dogs can be sure that their sleep will be disturbed on the mornings after a deep snow has fallen. The dogs will be up on the roofs of their doghouses, welcoming the snow with their long yowls of anticipation. "Wake up, wake up, WAKE UP!" They seem to be howling. "We want to play in the snow!"	184 197 210 222 232
The two most important things in a sled dog's life are running and pulling. Quite simply, that is what they are born to do.	245 256
A sled dog will like nothing better than to trot in front of a person on skis or a sled filled with supplies. They've been known to race with their owners on bikes or rollerblades. Pulling is a good way for them to get exercise and stay in shape all summer long. It's also great for the dogs' owners.	272 286 300 314 315
Together the dog and person team can romp and play in many ways during the snowless months. Nothing beats the thrill, however, of winter's return and a dog sled run through the snow.	327 338 348

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Together the dog and person team can romp and play in many ways during the snowless months. Nothing beats the thrill, however, of winter's return and a dog sled run through the snow.

Birds: Our Feathered Friends

0 There are thousands of different birds. Birds have two
 9 legs and two wings. Some birds are very small. Others
 19 are large. Birds are the only animals that have feathers.
 29 Feathers can be any color. They keep birds warm and dry.
 40 Flight feathers are very smooth.

45 Most birds can fly. Birds can fly because they have
 55 very light bones. Their strong muscles move the wings.
 64 The tail helps the bird to steer in the sky. Different birds
 76 have different shaped wings. This is because birds live in
 86 different places. Most birds live in trees. Other birds live
 96 high in the hills. Some live on the ground. Some birds fly
 108 long distances. They live one place in the summer. They
 118 live someplace else in the winter.

124 Some birds cannot fly. They are too big. The biggest
 134 bird is an ostrich. It can grow to be 8 feet tall and can
 148 weigh 300 pounds. An ostrich has strong legs. It can run
 159 very fast. Some birds are good swimmers. Penguins are
 168 birds that can swim. They can swim very fast. They use
 179 their wings to swim.

183

Total Words Read _____

- Errors _____

- CWPM _____

Reptiles: Cold-Blooded Animals

0 Reptiles have lived on earth for a long time. They
10 have been here for more than 300 million years. Reptiles
20 are animals. They are cold-blooded. This means that their
30 body temperature changes. When it is cold outside, reptiles
39 are cold. When it is hot outside, reptiles are hot. Reptiles
50 eat 30 to 50 times less food than mammals. This is because
62 they do not have to burn fuel for energy. Reptiles have dry,
74 scaly skin. Their skin protects them from drying out.

83 There are many kinds of reptiles. More than 8,000
92 types of reptiles live on earth. Reptiles live all over the
103 world. Some reptiles live on land. Others live in the water.
114 Living reptiles fall into four classes. Turtles are one class
124 of reptiles. They are reptiles with a shell. Turtles are the
135 oldest living reptile group. Crocodiles are another class of
144 reptiles. Alligators are included in this group. Lizards are
153 a type of reptile. Snakes are reptiles, too.

161

Total Words Read _____

- Errors _____

= CWPM _____

San Diego Quick Assessment of Reading Ability

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Record the highest grade level for each:

INDEPENDENT _____ INSTRUCTIONAL _____ FRUSTRATION _____

Preprimer	Grade Three	Grade Seven	Grade Eleven
see _____	city _____	amber _____	galece _____
play _____	middle _____	dominion _____	rotunda _____
me _____	moment _____	sundry _____	capitalism _____
at _____	frightened _____	capillary _____	prevaricate _____
run _____	exclaimed _____	impetuous _____	visible _____
go _____	several _____	blight _____	exonerate _____
and _____	lonely _____	wrest _____	superannuate _____
look _____	drew _____	enumerate _____	luxuriate _____
can _____	since _____	daunted _____	piebald _____
here _____	straight _____	condescend _____	crunch _____
Primer	Grade Four	Grade Eight	
you _____	decided _____	capacious _____	
come _____	served _____	limitation _____	
not _____	amazed _____	pretext _____	
with _____	silent _____	intrigue _____	
jump _____	wrecked _____	delusion _____	
help _____	improved _____	immaculate _____	
is _____	certainly _____	ascend _____	
work _____	entered _____	acrid _____	
are _____	realized _____	binocular _____	
this _____	interrupted _____	embankment _____	
Grade One	Grade Five	Grade Nine	
road _____	scanty _____	conscientious _____	
live _____	business _____	isolation _____	
thank _____	develop _____	molecule _____	
when _____	considered _____	ritual _____	
bigger _____	discussed _____	momentous _____	
how _____	behaved _____	vulnerable _____	
always _____	splendid _____	kinship _____	
night _____	acquainted _____	conservatism _____	
spring _____	escaped _____	jaunty _____	
today _____	grim _____	inventive _____	
Grade Two	Grade Six	Grade Ten	
our _____	bridge _____	zany _____	
please _____	commercial _____	jerkin _____	
myself _____	abolish _____	nausea _____	
town _____	trucker _____	gratuitous _____	
early _____	apparatus _____	linear _____	
send _____	elementary _____	inept _____	
wide _____	comment _____	legality _____	
believe _____	necessity _____	aspen _____	
quietly _____	gallery _____	amnesty _____	
carefully _____	relativity _____	barometer _____	

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Appendix B

Answer Key

Aunt Pam worked for a vet. She had lots of stories about	12
the animals she helped save. Aunt Pam liked to raise kittens	23
when the mother cat was lost or sick.	31
One weekend Kate went to stay with Aunt Pam. Aunt Pam	42
had three baby kittens. The kittens' eyes were not even open	53
yet. Aunt Pam told Kate she could help take care of them.	65
The smallest kitten was black and not very strong. Another	75
one was gray and cried a lot. The biggest one was white with	88
black spots on his feet and ears.	95
Kate named each one. She called the black one Itty Bitty	106
because it was so tiny. She named the gray one Dusty. She	118
named the white one Snowman.	123
Kate thought the kittens looked sweet when they curled up	133
in a ball and slept. Soon, they woke up and started to cry.	146
They cried because they wanted something to eat. Aunt Pam	156
warmed some formula, and Kate filled their small bottles.	165
"Which kitten do you want to feed?" Aunt Pam asked.	175
Kate picked Itty Bitty. Aunt Pam gave Kate a towel. She	186
showed Kate how to wrap the kitten so it would not scratch.	198
The kitten drank from the bottle for Kate. Kate felt grown	209
because she could help.	213
All weekend, Kate helped her aunt with the kittens. Kate	223
learned that it was a lot of work to take care of kittens. On	237
Sunday night, Kate went back home. She called often to see	248
how the kittens were. Aunt Pam said she had found good	259
homes for Dusty and Snowman. Kate's mom said Itty Bitty	269
could live with them! Itty Bitty would have the best home of all!	282

Aunt Pam worked for a vet. She had lots of stories about the animals she helped save. Aunt Pam liked to raise kittens when the mother cat was lost or sick.

One weekend Kate went to stay with Aunt Pam. Aunt Pam had three baby kittens. The kittens' eyes were not even open yet. Aunt Pam told Kate she could help take care of them.

The smallest kitten was black and not very strong. Another one was gray and cried a lot. The biggest one was white with black spots on his feet and ears.

Kate named each one. She called the black one Itty Bitty because it was so tiny. She named the gray one Dusty. She named the white one Snowman.

Kate thought the kittens looked sweet when they curled up in a ball and slept. Soon, they woke up and started to cry. They cried because they wanted something to eat. Aunt Pam warmed some formula, and Kate filled their small bottles. "Which kitten do you want to feed?" Aunt Pam asked.

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Andy was one of the many ants who worked daily in the anthill.	13
Every day Andy and the other ants would wake up and go off to work.	28
Andy's job was to carry pieces of sand up the side of the anthill to build it higher. Andy thought his job was really boring. Who would find carrying pieces of sand interesting? All Andy did day after day was stack tiny pieces of sand on top of other tiny pieces of sand. Where was the challenge in that?	44
	56
	68
	83
	87
All Andy really wanted was to create a daring new kind of anthill.	100
He wanted to build a modern castle. He could see the castle in his mind, and that goal made him continue his daily grind.	114
	124
One day Andy spoke to his friend, Sally. He took a chance and told her about his dream. "I don't want to build anthills, Sally. I want to build a modern castle."	138
	153
	156
"I don't know, Andy," said Sally. "Ants have lived in anthills for a very long time."	169
	172
"I need to tell someone who will understand," Andy thought.	182
The next day Andy went to see Queen Ant. He shook with fear as he knocked on her door.	196
	201
"Come in," said a low, pretty voice.	208
Andy stepped inside the queen's chambers. There were beautiful pictures on the walls and a bright carpet underfoot. The queen wore a golden crown. She was much bigger than Andy.	217
	230
	238
"Who are you, and what do you want?" she said to Andy.	250
Andy showed her his plans for building a castle. "You are a lovely queen," Andy told her. "Lovely queens should live in castles. I'm the ant who knows how to build them."	263
	275
	282
"You are right," the queen said. "You may start building my castle tomorrow."	294
	295

Andy was one of the many ants who worked daily in the anthill. Every day Andy and the other ants would wake up and go off to work. Andy's job was to carry pieces of sand up the side of the anthill to build it higher. Andy thought his job was really boring. Who would find carrying pieces of sand interesting? All Andy did day after day was stack tiny pieces of sand on top of other tiny pieces of sand. Where was the challenge in that?

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"I don't know, Andy," said Sally. "Ants have lived in anthills for a very long time."

"I need to tell someone who will understand," Andy thought.

The next day Andy went to see Queen Ant. He shook with fear as he knocked on her door.

"Come in," said a low, pretty voice.

Andy stepped inside the queen's chambers. There were beautiful pictures on the walls and a bright carpet underfoot. The queen wore a golden crown. She was much bigger than Andy.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" she said to Andy.

Andy showed her his plans for building a castle. "You are a lovely queen," Andy told her. "Lovely queens should live in castles. I'm the ant who knows how to build them."

"You are right," the queen said. "You may start building my castle tomorrow."

Along the seashore of Florida, the Gulf of Mexico's waves lapped up	12
on the sand. In a secluded cove, a pack of boys who called themselves	26
the Coral Cove Gang hunted for treasures. These five boys spent their	38
summer days combing the beaches of their town. Their beach searches	49
rewarded them with interesting discoveries, including pieces of driftwood	58
and sea glass, conch shells, lost jewelry and coins, and occasionally a	70
deserted fishing boat. The boys kept three salvaged boats tied to an	82
anchor in a secluded area about a mile from their homes.	93
When the weather was clear, the Coral Cove Gang would row their	105
boats out to a coral reef and dive for clams. With diving masks strapped	119
to their faces, they would keep an eye open for clams or for anything	133
unusual in the waters. One day this vigilance paid off.	143
Sonny, one of the younger boys, swam far from the shore and	155
splashed about in the deep water. The other boys watching were	166
concerned that a shark was in the water. Suddenly Sonny yelled, "Look!	178
Look!" In his hand he held a dripping wet, but shiny, gold doubloon.	191
This coin was the sort of discovery every young adventurer dreamed of.	203
Sonny had uncovered a sunken treasure.	209
The race was on. The other four boys dove into the water. Sonny	222
led the way to the area where he had unearthed the coin. At first it	237
appeared that nothing was there but sand and seaweed. As the five	249
boys hovered over the sea floor, the dark outline of an ancient ship	262
began to take shape before their bulging eyes.	270
They raced to the surface of the water and gasped for more air.	283
They put their heads together and made a plan. They agreed to borrow	296
scuba gear, nets, and all the other gear needed to harvest the gold from	310
the ship. They were able to salvage many pounds of gold doubloons,	322
gold bars, and precious jewelry. The items turned out to be over four	335
hundred years old. The boys of the Coral Cove Gang were rewarded	347
nicely for working so well together.	353

Along the seashore of Florida, the Gulf of Mexico's waves lapped up on the sand. In a secluded cove, a pack of boys who called themselves the Coral Cove Gang hunted for treasures. These five boys spent their summer days combing the beaches of their town. Their beach searches rewarded them with interesting discoveries, including pieces of driftwood and sea glass, conch shells, lost jewelry and coins, and occasionally a deserted fishing boat. The boys kept three salvaged boats tied to an anchor in a secluded area about a mile from their homes.

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The race was on. The other four boys dove into the water. Sonny led the way to the area where he had unearthed the coin. At first it appeared that nothing was there but sand and seaweed. As the five boys hovered over the sea floor, the dark outline of an ancient ship began to take shape before their bulging eyes.

They raced to the surface of the water and gasped for more air. They put their heads together and made a plan. They agreed to borrow scuba gear, nets, and all the other gear needed to harvest the gold from the ship. They were able to salvage many pounds of gold doubloons, gold bars, and precious jewelry. The items turned out to be over four hundred years old. The boys of the Coral Cove Gang were rewarded nicely for working so well together.

Appendix C

EXERCISE PRACTICE PASSAGE 104

Jump Rope

0 Jumping rope is fun. It is also good for you. Jumping
11 rope helps your heart get strong. Your lungs will get
21 strong, too. Jumping rope helps your feet and hands work
31 well together.

33 Be sure to wear good shoes. You will need shoes that
44 support your feet. Always jump on flat ground. Start out
54 slowly.

55 Start with your hands beside your body. Keep your
64 arms straight. Keep them relaxed. Jump on both feet. Land
74 on the balls of your feet. Jump once for each turn of the
87 rope. Be sure to keep your feet together. Keep your ankles
98 and knees together, too. Learn to jump low. Learn to jump
109 soft. Learn to jump standing straight up.

116 Keep track of how many times you jump. Start with 30
127 hops. Then, add some hops. Keep track of how long you
138 jump. Add one minute each week.

144

Total Words Read _____

- Errors _____

= CWPM _____

White, Brown, and Black: The Bear Facts

0 There are three types of bears in North America. They are the polar
13 bear, the brown bear, and the black bear. Canada and Alaska are the only
27 places where all three types of bears live.

35 Polar bears are marine mammals. They live in very cold climates
46 where there is ice and snow. Polar bears have hair that looks white. They
60 are the largest kind of bear. When they stand on their hind legs, polar
74 bears are between 8 and 10 feet tall. Polar bears can weigh between 600
88 and 1,400 pounds. They are meat eaters. They have special claws which
100 help them to hold onto the ice and catch seals. The ringed seal is the
115 polar bear's favorite meal!

119 Brown bears have different colors and names. Some brown bears
129 are dark brown. Other brown bears are blonder. All brown bears have
141 a hump above their shoulders. This hump is made of fat and muscle.
154 Brown bears who live on the coast are called brownies. Those who live in
168 the interior are grizzlies. Grizzlies are smaller and meaner than brownies.
179 Brown bears are 6 to 8 feet tall when standing on their hind legs. They
194 can weigh between 400 and 1,500 pounds. Brown bears eat a lot of
207 different things like bugs, fish, berries, and baby animals. They spend all
219 summer eating to store up fat for a winter nap.

229 Black bears are the smallest kind of bear. They are only 5 or 6 feet
244 when standing on their hind legs. Some black bears are a jet black color.
258 Others are lighter. Most black bears have brown noses and big ears. Black
271 bears weigh between 100 and 400 pounds. They have claws that are sharp
284 and curved. These special claws help them to climb trees.


294

Total Words Read _____

= Errors _____

= CWPM _____

Appendix D
Teacher Observation Checklist

	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	Other Observations
Reads in a quiet voice or whisper					
Graphs all data (score, date, story number)					
Follows along while reading					
Is honest about last word read.					
Participates in discussions after reading					
Reads with fluency, accuracy and expression					
Speed reads (no expression)					
Skips words while reading					
Makes many errors while reading					
Gets distracted while reading causing lower score					
Loses place while reading					
Can answer questions about story					
Off task, need redirection					
Drops word endings					



My Reading Survey

My Name _____ My
Grade _____

1. I like to read!



YES!



Just a little.



Not at all.

2. I think I am a good reader!



Oh YES!



Kind of.



Not so much.

3. I practice reading at home.



Everyday



Only sometimes



Hardly ever\

4. I like how I practice reading in reading group!



YES!



Just a little bit.



Not really.

5. What part of Six Minute Solution do you like best?



Being timed



Reading together



Charting my progress

6. My Six minute Solution graph is...



Going Up



Going Down



Going to the side

7. I share my graph with my parents each week.



Yes, and they like it!



Nope.



Sometimes I do, but sometimes I forget.

8. The Six Minute Solution is helping me become a better reader!



YES!!!



NO.



I'm not sure.

9. What would you change about The Six Minute Solution?

-
